UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST
OFFICE OF THE FACULTY SENATE

Minutes

The 823rd Regular Meeting of the Faculty Senate
Held on September 14, 2023 at 3:30 p.m. in Herter 227

A. ELECTIONS

1. Two At-Large Members of the Rules Committee

Nominees: Allison Messier (Libraries)
Ruth-Ellen Verock-O'Loughlin (Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies)

(no other nominations were made from the floor.)

Allison Messier elected by acclimation.

Ruth-Ellen Verock-O'Loughlin elected by acclimation.

2. Chair of the Rules Committee (elected from among the at-large members)

Nominee: Jon Olsen (History)

(no other nominations were made from the floor.)

Jon Olsen elected by acclimation.

3. **Associate Delegate to the Board of Trustees**

Nominee: Eric Berlin (Music and Dance)

(no other nominations were made from the floor.)

Eric Berlin elected by acclimation.

B. STATE OF THE CAMPUS

Remarks by Chancellor Javier Reyes

Chancellor Reyes: First of all, thank you very much. As you can imagine this a critical moment being my first Faculty Senate meeting. Especially since I have been in other meetings in the past at my two former institutions. This has been a long time in the making, and I am really happy that it is at UMass.

I am excited to be here and when I look at today's agenda and it says the "Chancellor's State of the Campus" I would be remiss to think that I could relay, in such detail, the state for the campus and have you wonder about how much I can know in such a short amount of time. But I have been doing a lot of learning, doing a lot of reading, and doing a lot of listening. So perhaps I can't speak on the entire state of the campus, but I can speak about what I know so far and what we're doing next as well.

First of all, in the first weeks that I've been here have been amazing. It is incredible to see the level of energy that we have as a university. It is incredible to see the amount of energy that came from our students at the start of the semester. I can't wait to see more.

People often tell me "well you came here when we were doing the search for the next Chancellor." But I didn't get to do a full search of the campus. But I do know why we call ourselves the destination of choice. We have received over 50,000 applications, which is a 30% increase over the past decade. When you look at our class of 2027, it is one of the most diverse in this campus's history. A large portion of the student population in that class are ALANA students. This is a great precedent, but I do think we have to do better.

We want to be a university that not only promotes diversity that represents our state but also that reflects the diversity on the national level. So that can be considered a state of the campus, as we are one of the most diverse campuses and we have one of the most diverse classes in our history, but we have a long way to go, and we need to work on that. Now we have to continue to recognize the great progress that UMass has made in these efforts. We have moved to a more holistic approach when reviewing applications.

The Supreme Court has done things that will make it harder for us in this effort, but we will look into our tactics and do even better. You may ask "how are we going to do that?". First of all, we are going to expand our outreach efforts to those communities, especially minorities. We are going to make sure that they see that they belong at this university. We have to understand the levels of underrepresented minorities has increased by over 70%. But that was when we had the Supreme Court precedent in favor of affirmative action. So even while we try to maintain that trajectory, we are going to have to do better. We have let those communities know that we welcome them here.

That to me, also speaks to what we are as a university. We are a research university, yes, we're a public university, yes, but we're also an online university. As an online university we also need to talk about access. We have to make sure that everyone who is look for a high-quality education can get one. We have to recognize that our academic reputation is extremely strong and important. It is extremely strong because of all of you who are in the rooms, online, and in this campus as faculty. You are those ones bringing that reputation to the campus. You are the one who, when students are in need of learning from the best of the best in a discipline, are reaching out to. So, we need to make sure that this excellent caliber of faculty we have on this campus remains extremely strong.

I represent what we are trying to represent in terms of diversity on this campus. Yes, when we look at the academic strength of our students, for the newest group the average high school GPA is a 4.08. The highest average of any class we've had. So, we are attracting incredible students. But we also need to make sure that we continue to have access for all students. We are a university that has been able to increase our retention and graduation rates.

When we look at our research mission, we have faculty that in 2023 had 1164 research awards, totaling two hundred and forty million dollars. We need to continue to grow that number and how we are going to do this is something we will have to talk about in planning. It's not only about the number or the dollars that you get, but also what we are doing with the research. What are we doing research in. We are a land grant research

university. We are taking on some of the biggest problem, challenges, and opportunities around the globe like green electronics and sustainability, social justice on a national impact, water management, transportation, nursing, and wellbeing of communities through increased access. We are taking on big issues that other institutions and organization are still having a hard time just to define. This is thanks to you.

I always say that I am going to listen. We need to take action on filling many of the important vacancies like for our Provost, Vice Chancellor positions, and more by April of 2024. We need to make an update on our strategic plan and explain where we are going to spend our resources to make sure we improve the campus and continue to have an impact. This will occur over the next few months. We need to have a sense of urgency when it comes to our timeline, especially when we are trying to maintain our trajectory on all levels. There will be many committees when it comes to academic excellence, student success, research and engagement, improvements in operations, and DEI.

All of you should have received emails from your Deans about coming to the listening sessions that I am hosting so we can take in more issues and concerns that you may have. Myself, the Provost, the Vice Provost, and all of the Vice Chancellors are showing up to listen. These sessions are being recorded and they will be available for all to see. They are part of an important component which is gathering information.

We know that the environment of higher education is changing. We know that the many other things are changing. You can choose to be one of the two of being changed by that environment or you can change and shape that environment. UMass has the opportunity to shape higher education. That is why I came to UMass. I wanted to be a part of a university that has the capabilities, that has the strength and intellectual resources to shape higher education. I want to work with to shape the environment of higher education that will define this campus for the next 20 to 30 years.

73% of our undergraduate student body is from Massachusetts. Over 60% of our in-state undergraduates come from the Greater Boston area. 64% of our bachelor's degree graduates stay in Massachusetts for at least five years after graduation. In 21-22 over 6,000 degrees were awarded to our undergraduate students. We award more than any other college or university in the state. We can attract businesses, innovation, and industry. We have to show the state that we are extremely important to the Commonwealth.

We need to use some of the resources that we have to attract more stakeholders, especially for private-public partnerships. I was at the JEDI conference and the mood was infectious. It was great. We need to have more people we want to see reflected, especially underrepresented minorities here on this campus.

Yes, we do have some problems we need to work on. We have challenges across the campus. Yes, I have heard what is happening with the real estate and how it is affecting our students. We have to look at the compensation challenges we have across the campus. We have looked at the facilities across campus that are in sub-standard shape. I want us to improve our facilities and has the solutions to the problems we seek to understand. I know we are building new, but we need to take care of some of our facilities that we have. We will have a plan that explains what we will prioritize when we have solutions, and we are constantly looking for resources to make those changes. But there is one thing that is always stopping us, and that is the financial resources. But we have some resources, and we will prioritize accordingly.

We are working in a shared governance space. We want to be inclusive in this effort. But we need to have this process be data-driven. That is how we can work together.

Let's have conversations about what we need. We will have more points of contact between the faculty and administration. All that I ask is that we be respectful. When we have conversations, just because we have different thoughts, doesn't mean we should assume or be disrespectful. Let's be respectful.

We have an incredible opportunity not only for ourselves but for our students and we can work together to make these things possible. I am truly blessed to be here. Let's work hard, let's laugh a little, and let's continue to work together on these issues for our campus.

Thank you.

(*Note: Due to recording issues, some unintelligible content may have been excluded or modified*.)

Q and A to follow

Senator Messier: A lot of us have experienced quite a lot over the last three or so years. A lot of us are dealing with trauma. You talk a lot about students feeling welcome and that they belong but what will you do to help faculty, librarians, and staff feel like they belong?

Chancellor Reyes: Thank you for the question, Senator Messier. I actually spoke to some of my Vice Chancellors in a meeting today about how we have to strengthen our messages around wellbeing. Of course, we talk about our students, because we want to put our students first, but we need to start expanding our thought process when it comes to wellbeing. Not just to expand our capacity and understanding on that issue but also provide it for our faculty and staff.

I have been meeting with a variety of groups on campus and I have been asking that exact question of what we can do. The best ideas almost always come from the faculty, staff, and students. We want to do something that is helpful to the wellbeing of the faculty and staff.

So, we will keep this in mind as we move forward because there are so many people in this community who struggle with this issue.

Senator Modenos: I wanted to make two comments on your statements concerning diversity and outreach. I think it is so important that, as the flagship campus, to do that outreach to those marginalized communities. But getting them here isn't the end game. Once they are here the university needs to provide a lot of support, we need a shift in perspective, and approach to teaching not just having those students here.

I am a part of the Adult Degree Completion Program here at UMass and I think it is so important that, as the flagship campus, to do that outreach to those marginalized communities as part of our mission to serve the Commonwealth. But getting them here isn't the end game. Once they are here the university needs to provide a lot of support, we need a shift in perspective, and approach to teaching not just having those students here but to also help them succeed.

If the University is dedicated to diversity and equity I hope that they will also do more outreach to the community colleges in the State, particularly those in the 413. I am not sure if you heard but we dwell here within the confines of the Tofu Curtain, and just outside the curtain there are community colleges that might as well be hundreds of miles away in terms of access to the University. Creating relationships and pathways for these Community Colleges, so those students can come to UMass, is important. Transfer students, nontraditional and adult students, are a growing and important demographic.

Given the enrollment cliff that is looming for traditional aged students, I hope that the University will spend time and energy on nontraditional and adult transfer students. I know the University loves their freshmen and on campus students, but I hope that it will also dedicate time and energies to nontraditional and adult transfer students.

Chancellor Reyes: Thank you for the question, Senator Modenos. I come from Mexico, as you all know. When you go to Mexico from the U.S. I try to explain the infrastructure of higher education and I get told that we have infrastructure is unmatched. We're just not connecting it right. And I think that this idea of free community colleges, one in which I stood side by side with the governor, is so important.

Our transfers are more important today than ever before. One of the things that is missing is that working with the faculty is so important. These community colleges have transferred courses too UMass in the past.

But we have to make sure those courses are the right ones. We have to talk with community colleges and work with the data to support students as they transfer. I really appreciate your expression on this issue. We need to ask how have we done this in the past and improve on that.

Senator Mann: I was interested in hearing you talk about deferred maintenance. The campus, as you know, is looking probably as good as it had thirty years ago. But it has come to my attention that there are severe issue with deferred maintenance. I know it is much harder to get funding for that than brand new buildings. I would love to see greater scrutiny on how deferred maintenance is progressing, especially the issues that have been buried in departments.

Chancellor Reyes: Thank you for the question, Senator Mann. What I can tell you is about the resources. But it is sometimes so big, that we have to take a step back and say okay, let's get an understanding. So that's a great start. We know which buildings are in the red, which are yellow or green, and which ones are blue. What we need to know is what would turn one of those yellows into a green. It starts with a small change, and then we have to bring the building up to code that goes from a $3 million dollar investment to a $30 million dollar investment.

So, we need to understand exactly what it is. I think that would be more than half the battle, because then it's not a general issue. We stop talking only amongst ourselves and all become advocates for the same thing. We can't solve it on our own, but we can understand it on our own, so that's what we're trying to do now. Thank you.

C. ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Principal Administrative Officers

Interim Provost Malone: Thank you, Presiding Officer Brewer. Good afternoon. There are some announcements. First, welcome back. The Provost search committee met this week. We'll soon have a website, authorized for the first week in October or maybe a little earlier. I also want to thank Professors Jon Olsen, Whitney Battle-Baptiste, and Jennifer Normanly who have joined. This was previously announced, but I put this information out there so you can get all of it.

The second announcement, Dean Cynthia Gerstl-Pepin of the College of Education has announced that she is completing her time as dean after seven years. We are very grateful to her for everything she's done. She'll be here through graduation. We'll start now the consultations required to begin the search process and form a search committee, as well as a search committee for Humanities and Fine Arts. We can start these searches, I believe, quite quickly.

Finally, we've had some questions and conversations with the Rules Committee over the summer, and I'd like to cede the microphone very briefly to Associate Provost Heather Sharpes-Smith to make an announcement about the conversion to Canvas.

Associate Provost Heather Sharpes-Smith: Just a few updates on the Learning Management Systems. As you know Canvas has been adopted. This fall we have 1900 Canvas courses, meaning 48% of our courses are being taught with Canvas. This is the majority of our courses. Moodle is a close second 45%, and Blackboard has 7%. Of the Canvas courses, 24% were created as new courses from scratch.

For those faculty members who used concierge migration, we're realizing that if they had any complex customizations that this didn't go as smoothly. So, we're working very closely with the faculty. The staff has contacted some that over the summer we weren't able to reach out to and we are working with them now. Faculty members realized that there's a few adjustments along the way, and changes in what things are called.

We did have a pretty robust communication strategy in the Provost's Office, as well as coming from joint communications from IT. Those emails have one of the most successful open rates, 70%, which is great. As we're starting to use Canvas, we have increased the support options. Consultations at our Zoom drop ins, we are averaging around 567 consults a week. And that started two weeks before the semester started so we are around the 5000 number. Most of the questions are pretty straight forward, again related to differences in design and operations compared to Moodle and Blackboard.

We heard from students; they really like Canvas. I think the biggest issue now is that we have three. And we are saying to bear with us at this moment, we will have one very shortly. So, if there are further questions, please reach out to me or IDEAS. We will be doing a longer presentation at the next meeting, or one coming up.

So far, we are happy. There's been some unexpected things, but we are handling it, and are pretty happy with the migration. The goal is by Fall of 2024 that all new courses will be taught in Canvas, and we will just be moving the stragglers over.

Vice Chancellor Kennedy: Thank you, Presiding Officer Brewer. Welcome back. I just wanted to let everyone know that University Relations is taking over management of the Springfield Center. We will be doing a lot of renovations with the city, and we will have an increased presence in the city as well. We plan to make this center really successful and provide more resources to local schools.

Acting Vice Chancellor Vandenburg: Thank you, Presiding Officer Brewer. Fiscal year 2023 was the most successful year on campus for sponsored research. More than $240 million dollars for sponsored research went to faculty and supporting staff on campus. As many of you may have seen, there was an announcement, the first check came from NSF in support of the NSF Center for Braiding, Indigenous Knowledges, and Sciences. This comes to UMass via Sonya Atalay and Jon Woodruff who are the PI and co-PI, but also are going to help integrate UMass with real partners that are meant to be mutually beneficial, not just regionally, but nationally and internationally with indigenous reparations. This is the largest grant that's ever been received.

Although I am the Acting Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement, the Chancellor has asked me with to be the Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement. So, I will be working with a variety of Faculty Senate councils, committees, and taskforces.

Vice Chancellor Mangels: To comment on deferred maintenance, as soon as the last class ends in the spring semester, there is tremendous amount of work that begins with renovations and construction, and this summer was no different. We had projects going on in the libraries and LCTC centers. We had LGRC renovations with the Math department. One of the bigger projects /renovations is Goodell and that commenced during this summer as well to improve the interior and house a number of important campus departments.

Hasbrouck Plaza, many of you may have noticed that, and that will continue on into October. That's going to really look good and transform the Plaza.

Many of you as you drive through campus may have noticed a few extra speed bumps, which are really slowing down traffic. That is part of a bunch of safety and transportation work that we are doing in conjunction with the Transportation Center.

The last is the maker space within the Ag-Engineering building. There will be an open house at the end of the month. Thank you for all your patience through this difficult process.

2. The Secretary of the Faculty Senate

Secretary Paik: Thank you, Presiding Officer Brewer. Thank you, Chancellor Reyes, for your comments and remarks. I just wanted to thank Vice Chancellor Misra for the support for getting us back in this room. It was a lot of work to get these operations and we have the graduate assistants Lucas Henrique and Caitlyn Foster helping.

Welcome back everyone. Last time I was in this room was in 2020 with some discussion of Covid-19 maybe coming here. But I really appreciate seeing you all back here. Since this is our first week back, I wanted to help us recollect some of our norms which included a mixture of voice votes and show of hands. Another is if you have questions please come and queue up at the microphones.

I'd like to congratulate Senators Messier and Verock-O'Loughlin on their election as the two at-large members of the Rules Committee. I also want to thank Senators Kalmakis and Telfer for their long-standing service on this committee. I also want to congratulate Senator Olsen for his election as Chair of the Rules Committee. Also, to congratulate Senator Berlin for his reelection as the Associate Delegate to the Board of Trustees.

So, we have 18 new senators joining us for this semester. We have a wide range of departments and backgrounds.

District 1:
Stephen Nonnenmann (Mechanical and Industrial Engineering)

District 2:
David McLaughlin (Electrical and Computer Engineering)
Marco Duarte (Sub for Vouvakis) (Electrical and Computer Engineering)

District 3:
Maria Barbon (Languages, Literatures & Cultures)

District 5:
Emiliano Ricciardi (Music and Dance)
Gregory Spiridopoulos (Music and Dance)

District 6:
Sarah Patterson (English)
Laura Briggs (Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies)

District 8:
Annie Sollinger (Sub for Meghan Bergin) (Library)

District 14:
Timothy Randhir (Environmental Conservation)
Anita Milman (Environmental Conservation)

District 19:
Leyla Keough (Teaching and Faculty Development)
Lisa Modenos (UWW)

District 21:
Doug Rice (Political Science)
Alexander March (Political Science)

District 22:
Itai Sher (Economics)
Christopher Bauner (Resource Economics)

District 23:
Kate Hudson (Educational Policy, Research, & Administration)

Welcome to the Faculty Senate!

Finally, I am pleased to announce that we are preparing to launch our new Faculty Senate website. If you have not seen the old Faculty Senate website, it looks to be in shambles. The reason is looks like it is in shambles is because we have not been updating it. We are quickly getting ready to release the new website, hopefully in October, and a great deal of work has been put in by our graduate assistants Lucas Henrique and Caitlyn Foster. They will also be doing a presentation at the next Senate meeting. Each Senator has a profile, so if you have a picture you would like to use, please send it our way, otherwise we will use what we have.

This website is an attempt to showcase what the university policies are. So, we will be looking for comments and suggestions or if there are any errors. But we can talk about that more at the next meeting.

3. The Chair of the Rules Committee

Chair/Senator Olsen: I am happy to report that over the summer the Rules Committee met twice. Twice as the Rules Committee and twice with the administrators. We take action over the summer and those are listed in the agenda for approval. We approved a variety of courses, a special report from the nomination committee and also some revisions to the degree requirements for the college of engineering.

4. The Faculty Delegates to the Board of Trustees

Senator Berlin: Thank you for re-electing me. We will be going to our first board meeting next week and we will have more to report then.

5. The Representative of the Massachusetts Society of Professors

Co-President/ Senator Liberatore: I love September. Such a time to be on campus even though last week was “July”, but now it is September. We are back. September on a college campus is a time for beginnings. It is a time of joyful work. And I'm so happy to be here, so happy to be here as one of the workers on this campus, the faculty, the staff, the graduate student workers, the people who make this campus work. The organized labor that makes this campus work. Yes!

So, I'm hopeful that we will have a great year together, so we can make this campus work.

So, you may recall that our raises went through. In no small part thanks to the activism and work of members of this campus, across the commonwealth, of those working the inside game and the outside game to convince the Governor and the Legislature to fund our raises. I mean eventually, when they get to it, it's coming. The supplemental bill is in the House now. We expect it to be funded hopefully by the beginning of October.

What else have we done lately? Last year the Commonwealth passed, again, due to the hard work that we see many members here across the campus, across the country, we passed the "Fair Share Amendment". Which is a tax on incomes over $1 million dollars a year which is earmarked solely for public education and public transportation. That's forecast to the raise about $2 billion dollars a year. Some of that has already begun to be allocated to higher education. But now is the time to close the deal. The Cherish Act is slowly moving through the State House. Our state senator is holding a hearing this Monday to fund the Cherish Act.

The Cherish Act is helping in supporting many of the things we are talking about. Funding deferred maintenance, funding student services, funding of guaranteed debt-free education pipelines through community college, 2–4-year colleges in Massachusetts, and on and on and on.

Think of all the things we could do with that money, more faculty, more staff, and support services for students. It's an amazing thing that I think faculty and administrators can all unite behind.

Anyone who has the time should be there next Monday. We're sending MSP, we're sending a bus 6:30 in the morning. If we need 2 buses, fantastic, as many as want to come, or drive yourself. You can't do that call in your testimony. You can't do that, go knock on your representative's door. Tell them that this matters. Members should lobby and the administration should lobby. I don't care what the Board has to say.

Leadership, you should lobby on behalf of this fine campus and make sure that the State has passed this money to us, to the other institutions across the State that serve the commonwealth and the students.

Okay, what else am I looking forward to? I'm looking forward to the hard, but rewarding work of negotiating with, and sometimes against, the administration, to make sure that faculty have what they need to do their jobs well. We've met with the Chancellor already. I'm excited to have a positive working relationship with the administration. It's going to be great; I can feel it.

I am excited to return to the classroom this afternoon, 200 students, and they were almost all there. It is great to see them all and wonderful to have conversations with them. I hope you are all excited, too, about the joyful work of running this university, and I'm excited for you to join me. Thank you very much.

6. The President of the Graduate Student Senate

N/A

7. The President of the Student Government Association

SGA President Tess Weisman: Hello everyone. I am the newly elected President of the Student Government Association. We are currently planning our first meeting and we are working on getting more undergraduate students on to the faculty senate council and committees, at least one member on each one.

The SGA would love to meet with faculty and learn more about the governance of the university. We had a really great conversation with the Chancellor on a variety of issues over the summer. Please reach out for any questions.

8. The Student Trustee

N/A

D. QUESTION PERIOD

Senator Messier: I would like to, in the next bargaining meeting, if there is a way to set expectations about getting our raises. We don't have any more months to have our raises constantly put off.

Senator Liberatore: The money is there. The Governor signed but the Legislature chose not to pay us. They went to recess. It is not something we can control, but we can shame them and give them a hard time. The money is owed. The more people that say that and complain, the more things will move. We should have retro back to July. But we have to push.

Senator Baird: I am wondering about deferred maintenance. Don't we have a sense about what we are up against already? Or do we really don't know what we need to act on deferred maintenance?

Vice Chancellor Mangels: There have been some pauses and some incredible cost escalations since Covid-19. We have a lot of studies from our consulting group about the costs. But as the Chancellor mentioned, there is only so much money to be put towards any issue, but we have to prioritize what is next. Accessibility, bad classrooms, and some technology issues. It is just as effective to build a new facility as to maintain and upgrade an old one. We do have a long list. But we also don't receive a lot of state support for these things. We get about $5 million a year only for critical projects, but we will try to lobby for more.

Senator Baird: Can we also have phone consultations for things like zoom and classroom issues?

Acting Vice Chancellor Vandenburg: We are setting up a new system and once it is fully operational we can have phone calls.

E. ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE RULES COMMITTEE (ACTING ON ITS SUMMER AUTHORITY) ON BEHALF OF THE FACULTY SENATE. APPROVAL OF THE FOLLOWING:

MOTION: 01-24 **That the Faculty Senate affirm the actions taken by the Rules Committee on behalf of the Faculty Senate over summer 2023, as listed on this agenda, Item E.**

Secretary Paik read the motion.

MOTION 01-24 Approved.

F. ANNUAL REPORTS

1. 2021-22 Annual Report of the Graduate Council, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 24-001

This Report was Received.

2. 2022-23 Annual Report of the University Writing Committee, as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 24-002

This Report was Received.

G. NEW BUSINESS: COURSES (CONSENT AGENDA)

[A consent agenda may be presented by the Presiding Officer at the beginning of a meeting. Items may be removed from the consent agenda on the request of any one member. Items not removed may be adopted by general consent without debate. Removed items may be taken up either immediately after the consent agenda or placed later on the agenda.]

MOTION: 02-24 **That the Faculty Senate approve the courses JUDAIC 251, CHEM 123H, CHEM 123LF, CHEM 123LS, COMPSCI 363, JOUNRAL 365, as recommended by the Academic Matters and General Education Councils.**

Secretary Paik read the motion.

MOTION 02-24 Approved.

H. NEW BUSINESS: JOINT TASK FORCE

MOTION: 03-24 **That the Faculty Senate approve the creation of a Joint Task Force on the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement (JTFCCCE), as presented in Sen. Doc. No. 24-003.**

Secretary Paik read the motion.

MOTION 03-24 Approved.

MOTION: 04-24 **That the Faculty Senate approve the creation of a Joint Task Force on Generative AI (JTFGAI), as presented in Sen. Doc. 24-004.**

Secretary Paik read the motion.

MOTION 04-24 Approved.